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[REDACTED]

Attached SWS memo  
arrived 1700 Friday.

R.L. had departed [REDACTED]

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memo makes some  
useful points, esp. #6  
on earlier evidence of  
Iraqi intentions.

Suggest you forward memo  
to R.L. Monday A.M.

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[REDACTED]

**TOP SECRET**  
**Strategic Warning Staff**

Washington, D.C. 20301

11 April 1980

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MEMORANDUM FOR: NIO/W

SUBJECT: Possible Iranian-Iraqi Conflict

1. Events in the Iraqi-Iranian area deserve attention. Possible Soviet intervention in Iran as a byproduct of Iranian-Iraqi hostilities is important enough to the U.S. government to warrant a special report from the intelligence community. I fear that the focus by mid-East experts on their area of expertise is overlooking the far graver potential threat to peace involved with a Soviet military intervention from the Caucasus into Iran. The following paragraphs provide some basis for concern that such might occur. [ ]

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2. Recent Soviet commentary indicates a tilt in favor of Iran in its feud with Iraq. In the past week, Moscow has firmly endorsed Teheran's position on the US Embassy hostages, and a 10 April Tass commentary accused Iraq of waging an anti-Iranian campaign. We believe, this tilt toward Iran, could presage more concerted support for Teheran by Moscow in the event of large-scale hostilities with Baghdad. Although long and generous supporters of Iraq, the long history of Soviet-Iraqi relations has shown the Iraqis to be unreliable and resistant to Soviet efforts to meddle in Iraqi internal affairs. [ ]

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3. In spite of their basic animosity for the Soviets, the Iranians, according to their Minister of Defense, are inclined to accept assistance from the Soviet Union in expelling outside "aggressors." For its part, Moscow might view intervention in Iran against Iraqi forces to be more profitable than supporting the Iraqis because intervention would bring Soviet forces freely into Iran through Azarbayjan and provide an opportunity for setting up some form of Soviet control there. The Soviets probably believe that further breakdown in Iranian central government control of Azarbayjan, attendant to an Iran-Iraq conflict, would offer a fertile field for Soviet efforts. The Soviets probably also believe that a tilt toward Iran, if the conflict does not take place, would provide a broader base for the Tudeh Communist Party support within Iran. [ ]

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4. Even without Iran's acquiescence, the Soviets might view an Iraqi-Iranian conflict as an opportunity to intervene on behalf of the central government in Iran or on behalf of some "autonomous Democratic Republic" in Azarbayjan area. In doing so the Soviets would almost certainly invoke the 1921 Soviet-Iranian Treaty as a legal justification, or claim that they were invited by the Azarbayjan Democratic Party or the Tudeh Communist Party. [ ]

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5. In the past two months or so, the Soviets have improved the posture of their Transcaucasus Military District opposite northwestern Iran.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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. As a result, should Moscow decide to move into Iran, for whatever reason, their current posture in the Transcaucasus would enable them to do so quickly.

[REDACTED]

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6. Evidence indicates that Iraq has probably planned to initiate a major military move against Iran with the aim of toppling the Khomeini regime.

[REDACTED]

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-- Since the first of the year official Iraqi diplomatic contacts sought to engage the Kuwaitis to act as intermediary in obtaining United States approval and support for Iraqi military action against Iran.

Since these earlier indicators of Iraqi planning, their relations with Iran have become violent and unpredictable. Over the last two weeks the situation has deteriorated and the military forces seem to be moving uncontrollably toward war. The following are illustrative of the situation:

IRAQ

IRAN

[REDACTED]

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8 April

Iraq extends service of conscripts and recalls all reservist soldiers born in 1948.

[REDACTED]

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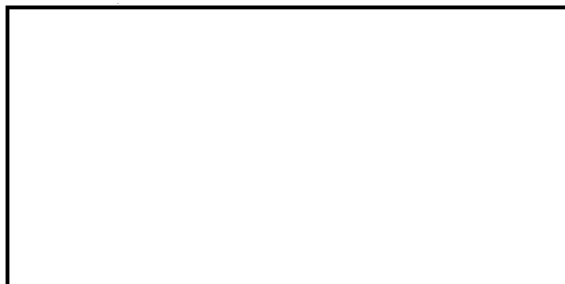
[REDACTED]

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9 April      Iraqis summon ambassador from  
Caracas to take over as Army  
Chief of Staff.



Iranians note the new Iraqi  
Chief of Staff's past military  
experience in actions on their  
border.

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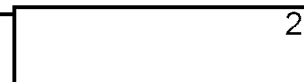
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10 April



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*gfo* Director, SWS

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*R. Lehman*

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10 Apr 80

**Memo For** Mr. Lehman

Attached is our final <sup>of</sup> the special report. I believe it incorporates the comments you gave me earlier in the week. Unless otherwise directed, we will send this to the printer tonight.

  
Director, SWS

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13a

**TOP SECRET****Forward**

It is the function of the Strategic Warning Staff to provide a thorough airing of serious alternative explanations of key intelligence issues with strategic warning implications. This report examines alternatives different than those agreed to in the 13 March IIM on Soviet Intentions and Options in Southwest Asia: Near Term Prospects. Evidence that has become available since the 7 March cutoff for that document suggests an alternative and more ominous view of current Soviet policy toward military intervention in Iran.

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**TOP SECRET RUFF**